

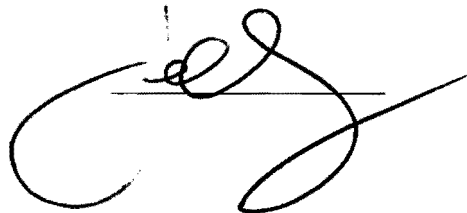
Issues Facing Male Elementary Teachers

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Ball State University
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Date
May 2006

Expected Date of Graduation
May 2006

Abstract

The purpose of this project is to explore the various issues confronting male elementary teachers. First the history of male elementary teachers is presented in order to prepare for an in depth discussion regarding the many issues they currently face. The five issues that are discussed include: the modern male schoolteacher, the advantages/disadvantages of male teachers, the need for a male role model, the reasons there are so few male teachers, and the methods and programs being used to bring them back into the profession.

Acknowledgements

-I would like to thank Dr. Jerrell Cassady for advising me throughout this project. His insight guided me in bringing this idea into fruition.

For the purpose of this project, I would like to recognize and address 5 major issues concerning male elementary teachers. In order to lay the groundwork for such a discussion, I will preface these topics by presenting a history of the evolution of teaching with a specific focus on men and their place in the profession. Once this history has been established, the first issue I will address concerns facing the modern male elementary schoolteacher. Who exactly is choosing teaching as a career? The second issue being addressed involves the advantages and disadvantages of having male teachers. The third issue elaborates upon these benefits and liabilities by examining the consensus in the literature regarding the need for male role models at the elementary level. The fourth issue being addressed is a topic of intense research and debate in that I am asking why there are so few men teaching in our elementary classrooms. The fifth section explores efficacy of the current methods and programs that are attempting to bring men back into the classroom.

The History of the Male Schoolteacher

Exploring the history of teaching can essentially help us to understand issues that are being faced in the present and possibly give us some foresight to issues that will have to be dealt with in the future. Given the focus of this work on the United States educational system, the historical review will go back only as far as the early American colonial periods. It is feasible to go back much further, but I feel that the most relevant issues to the subject matter will be addressed in an in-depth look at the groundwork and developments of our own educational system.

Due to the lack of a system of public education, most instruction was conducted in homes by parents or through some type of apprenticeship. There were a few who were

fortunate enough to be offered a free education through churches, though these services were performed to not only educate, but to instill the morals of Christianity. Those from the middle and upper class in the colonies who attended a school, however, were compelled to pay a fee to the tutors who ran the institution. The men who ran these private schools expected the teachers they hired to share the same beliefs and social status as themselves. Due to this, most teachers were young, white, well-educated males. It is apparent that the traditional, upper class men who ran these schools played a large role in establishing the conservative methods of the first formal education in our American society (Rury, 1989).

In the more rural areas of colonial America, young men were often hired to tutor children for a brief period of time before moving to another family. Women were discouraged from this simply because lower and middle class women had received little to no education in the first place and it was considered improper for upper class women to move from place to place as the young male teachers were forced to do. The men who taught in this nomadic fashion, as well as the men who taught in the more urban areas, were typically using their experiences gained from teaching as a means of advancing their careers. In other words, teaching was a stepping stone for young males as very few stayed in the profession for longer than a few years (Rury, 1989).

The first formal system of public education in the United States was founded in New England. Massachusetts was the first colony to have schooling which was paid for by taxpayers and by the 1700's almost all towns in New England had a similar system. The main purpose of this education, however, was similar to the intentions of the clergy men who had been teaching the lower class: instill morality and a strong sense of

Christianity. Again, just like the teachers hired for earlier-established private institutions, those who were hired to teach were young, white, well-educated males. Women were excluded from these services, thus eliminating any chance that they would be able to teach in one of the schools themselves. This didn't stop private institutions from being formed as the first "Dame" schools emerged around this time. These schools were run by women and were all girl schools (Rury, 1989).

Aside from the teaching opportunities given to women by "Dame" schools, teaching was an overwhelmingly male profession all the way up to the early 1800's. As noted earlier though, men rarely stayed in this career path for long and were often forced to find separate, part-time jobs to help supplement their income. It is evident, through observing the high turnover rate, that education simply wasn't a priority at this time in our history (Clifford, 1989).

In the early to mid 1800's, rapid economic growth and all-encompassing institutional reforms led a dramatic change in the make-up of the profession. Teachers were still dominated by white, middle class citizens, but for many reasons they consisted more and more of females. This era has become known as the beginning of the feminization of teaching. School terms became increasingly longer, up to 8 months, and therefore discouraged men from finding part time work to supplement the poor salary. Also, the ideology of the time prevented a wide range of job opportunities for the middle-class women who were becoming teachers. They simply didn't have many other options. The schools themselves didn't change their hiring tendencies overnight, however, as they still preferred to employ males, specifically for disciplinary reasons. Often, schools were forced to hire women because it became increasingly difficult to keep men in the

classroom. This trend did end up working to the advantage of the schools, though, as the already low salary for a male was even lower for a female (Sedlak, 1989).

As the 19th century progressed, many changes were made to America's school systems. These were brought about for a number of reasons including the success of the Industrial Revolution as well as the massive number of immigrants (Carter, 1989). Because of the massive growth of the country, the school system was forced to adapt. There was a huge demand for teachers and the trend that began in the middle of the century continued as women progressively filled more and more teaching positions (Carter). A distinction must be made here, however, as the advancement of the feminization of teaching increased the percentage of female teachers in public elementary schools to more than 70%, there was still a balance in public high schools as the percentage of female teachers was only at 50% (Clifford, 1989). As the 19th century ended, it was apparent that a major shift had occurred over the course of the century. The predominantly male profession had become a female occupation, even though men still held on to most positions of authority or any that garnered higher salaries in the school system, such as a principal. One trend held over from when the profession was dominated by males continued to be true throughout the feminization of teaching as both sexes continued to use their position as a stepping stone to their careers.

The significant events of the early 1900's had their effects on teaching. Both during the Great Depression and after World War II, efforts were made to bring men back into the classroom (Clifford, 1989). The idea behind these attempts were to reestablish men as the patriarch in the American family as it was thought that children, primarily boys, needed to be exposed to strong male figures (Clifford, 1989). Despite these efforts,

little change was actually made in the general composition of the school systems from the turn of the 20th century until the Postwar Baby Boom of the 1950's (Rury, 1989). The schools saw enrollment increasing and were faced with serious teacher shortages. Until this time there was an understanding among school administrators which discouraged them from hiring married women, as it was believed prior to this period that women with children wouldn't be able to take care of a classroom as well. Changing perceptions about female's roles in the workplace combined with this demand for teachers caused schools to consent to hire married women (Clifford, 1989). Also during the 1950's, teaching began to necessitate higher requirements for training which served as another deterrent to men as few were willing to dedicate their education to learning how to teach. Before this time, men were usually given a general education and then taught for several years before finding their career. All of these factors came together to cause several changes in the school's workforce. One obvious change that was brought about was the fact that women now dominated the profession. Another less obvious change is that teaching became less of a temporary job and more of a career. For women it was caused by the simple fact that they could now work after being married and therefore weren't forced to quit teaching once they wanted to start a family. For men it was likely caused by the fact that the stricter education requirements for a teacher weeded out those who were using the profession as a transition (Rury, 1989).

The first half of the 20th century was a time in which there were more female teachers, percentage-wise, than at any other time in our nation's history. Teaching was considered "women's work" and was therefore held in low regard (Clifford, 1989). Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, a renewed emphasis has been placed on

education and the status of teachers, in a social context, has risen as well. These changing views slowly led the way for men to once again enter the teaching profession. Another contributing factor to the reemergence of male teachers was the acceptance of women into occupational roles that had previously been denied to them (Rury, 1989). This, along with better work environments and higher salaries, gives us reason to believe that teaching is becoming more and more acceptable for either gender to pursue as a career.

The Modern Male Schoolteacher

As I have already gone into some depth regarding the historical influences related to the prevalence of male schoolteachers, the next logical topic for exploration is the product of that evolution. That is, in addition to having simply fewer men in the classrooms, those men choosing to become schoolteachers in today's society differ greatly from those who chose to teach in the 18th and 19th century. The profession at that time was open and accepting to males while our modern society attaches a stigma to men choosing a career in a field widely regarded as "women's work" (Rury, 1989; Foster & Newman, 2005). This stigma, along with many other deterrents, leaves only a select few out of the many capable teaching candidates. Some of the other deterrents, which I will discuss in more depth later, include a lack of salary, a low social status, working in a female-dominated profession, and the threat of sexual abuse charges. So in order to be able to run through this gauntlet of difficulties and make it out to the other side, men entering this profession are often attributed with having a strong self-identity (Hebert 2000).

Due to the fact that teaching elementary school is a nontraditional career for a man, research suggests that men entering the profession have a different set of motivational needs than men who choose traditional careers. One motivational difference is that the need to be seen as a figure with high status in our society is considered to be less important for these men (Chusmir, 1990). This is in addition to higher levels of intrinsic motivation which can be assumed simply by the altruistic demands of the job. In fact, very few of the draws to teaching involve anything that could be considered extrinsically motivating which can lead anyone to believe that it takes a “different” kind of man to choose to become an elementary schoolteacher. As mentioned earlier, a strong self-identity leads many men past the difficulties that are faced in choosing teaching as a career. However, identity formation occurs at various times in a person’s life and has therefore led many men into teaching as a second or third career choice. One such example is brought to us through a case study performed by Paul Sargent (2001) in which a man named Jake describes his roundabout path in choosing to become a teacher:

Originally I wanted to be an architect. I went to school, went to junior college. I just knew I wasn’t going to be able to keep up so I changed my major to business and went to State U. and got a degree in management at State U. and graduated just in time for a recession in the early ‘80s and didn’t really find a job immediately, and I started doing some retail management. I managed a record store, managed a health food store, and kind of bummed around and realized, gee, this is really dead end, I’m not really going anywhere with this, and decided I wanted something else, so

my mother had a friend who was a teacher, who said, “Well, come and observe teaching (Sargent, 2001 pp. 34-35).”

It is important to note that Jake’s original career choices all involved professions which are widely considered as masculine, or are at least dominated by men. In this case, it is apparent that what Jake considered important in choosing a career changed over time. The study later goes on to tell us that some of Jake’s occupational needs and desire for self actualization were met when he decided to become a teacher.

Other similar case studies show us some of the factors that men choosing to become teachers have in common. In a study performed by Hebert (2001) it was found that the men he chose to study all had a strong belief in self which was caused or influenced by several aspects of growing up which included, “overcoming adversity faced during their childhood, adolescence, or early adulthood; exposure to appropriate male career role models; and open-minded parents who provided emotional support.” Through these findings, Hebert came to several conclusions regarding the common influences. One, that adversity faced early in life led those studied to have a stronger sense of empathy than they would have had if not challenged to overcome such difficulties. Two, that exposure to positive male career role models can have beneficial aspects at nearly any level, ranging from the elementary classroom all the way to college professors. And three, that the emotional support from the parents and families was crucial in helping the young men pursue their career of choice.

Another case study performed by Cooney and Bittner (2001) showed results negating the findings of Hebert. The men studied mostly had strong parental support, similar to those in Hebert’s study, though there was a significant lack of positive male

career role models. This could be influenced by the fact that Cooney and Bittner's research studied exclusively men who were dual elementary education/early childhood majors whereas Hebert's study involved simply elementary education majors. This could correlate with findings outlining the differences within the group of men who choose to teach at the elementary level, of which I will discuss later. And while the three common factors presented by Hebert are proven to not be all encompassing to males within the field, they do provide some insight into some of the influential experiences shared by many who are entering the profession in the 21st century.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Male Teachers

Now that we have some background information on the type of man who chooses to become a teacher, I would like to go into detail regarding the benefits and drawbacks to having these men in the elementary classroom. When discussing the advantages and disadvantages of male teachers, it is obvious that they are being compared to female teachers, though later on I would also like to draw some attention to a few of the intragender differences that recent research has found.

First I would like to discuss some of the advantages of male elementary teachers. Many claims have been made since the 1960's and 1970's regarding the positive impact that men can have in the lives of young children. These claims include giving children a positive model of masculinity, preventing crime committed by youth, making up for a lack of a male influence at home, enriching the scholastic achievement of boys and also putting a stop to the perception that school is dominated by women (Clyde 1989). While some of these claims have been the subject of recent study, other claims are more difficult to prove or disprove through research as there are so many variables to consider.

J. J. Jensen (1996) provides support for one of the claims given in his study on European childcare as he states that male workers can provide a positive influence on children who don't have a stable father figure at home. This correlates with the idea that male teachers can provide a role model for fatherless children, which is a subject that I will discuss in more depth later. Jensen's study did, however, provide some valuable insight into some of the advantages of having a perfectly gender-balanced childcare center. In his study, childcare centers with an even ratio of men to women were compared with centers that were only staffed by women. In his findings, several advantages were made clear as he states:

- It appears that the girls are affected most by the fact that men are employed, at least with regard to their choice of activities.
- All the children occupy themselves more with activities involving construction and movement. This confirms statements from both male and female pedagogues (childcare workers) that men influence children towards spatial accomplishments.
- For both boys and girls there is an increase in social games and in social relationships when they are not playing their games. There is more dialogue between the children and the adults, and amongst the adults themselves.
- The children have more contact and dialogue with the male workers than with the female workers and this applies more to the girls than to the boys (Jensen, 1996 pp. 18).

While it is important to note that these findings pertain to studies performed in childcare centers, it still brings with it relevant implications to the elementary school setting. It is also necessary to restate that these advantages were found in schools with an *equal* number of men and women employees and not a center with only male workers.

Another one of the common claims presented by Clyde was addressed in a study performed by Schell and Courtney (2001). The idea that male teachers would improve the academic achievement of boys, specifically those with an absent father, was researched and proven false. The study showed that there was no evidence to support the claim that a male teacher would improve the scholastic performance of the sixth grade boys that were studied. The authors go on to comment that perhaps the claim could possibly be proven true if the study was for younger boys, when the need for a stable male influence is greater and has more of an impact on a child's development. Relating to this idea that being a male isn't an advantage in itself, Cooney and Bittner's previously mentioned case study includes the men being researched making an important point by stating that simply being a man isn't enough to be considered advantageous to the students. They claimed that men must be good teachers first if they are to be regarded as a valuable asset to a classroom.

Some of the arguments or possible disadvantages to having men teach in an elementary classroom are laid out well by Sarah Farquhar. In her research, she found that the three most relevant reasons that are offered as explanations for keeping men out of the elementary classroom were: (a) men sexually abuse children more often than women; (b) women can do what men can do in a classroom and (c) men take the top positions in education from women (Farquhar, 1997). Farquhar's first point asserting pedophilia and

sexual abuse will be explored in greater depth when I discuss some of the reasons why men shy away from becoming elementary teachers. The second point is founded on the idea that women can display sufficient masculine attributes and through that idea, men don't have to be sought after to work with children. The validity of this perspective has been called into question by research, such as Jensen's (1996) finding that female dominated childcare centers didn't compare well to the centers with an equal gender ratio of staff workers. The third point about the common belief that men take top positions from women is actually well-founded, but not in the sense that the positions are being pried away from women. Farquhar claims that although there are more male principals than female ones, it is likely to be caused by the fact that many men working in the elementary grades feel greater pressure to be the "breadwinner" of the family. It is true though that men in the profession are often viewed as wanting to advance to managerial positions, especially those men who are concerned with displaying traditional views of masculinity, such as "leadership and management" (Francis & Skelton, 2001). This could lead to a negative impact in the classroom as students who are aware of this stereotype might find their teacher to be less than reliable or someone who doesn't truly care about them.

There are several studies which directly compare the attitudes of female to male teachers with issues relating to their students. In one such study by Hopf and Hatzichristou (1999) on topics concerning teacher gender in Greek schools, it was discovered that male teachers viewed the interpersonal relationships among male students to be less positive than did female teachers. The possibility is mentioned that the female teachers in the study were displaying stereotypical gender specific behavior by being

more maternal and accepting of the problematic behaviors in boys. It is also important to mention that the same study found male and female teachers to react more favorably towards the girls in the class. These findings are coupled with the explanation that the teacher gender isn't as significant in this case as both sexes view the girls in the class to be more suited to display typical student roles according to the expectations of the teachers.

One aspect to be mentioned is the fact that there are differences not only between male and female elementary teachers, but also between male teachers working with younger children (ages 3-8) and those men teaching older children (ages 7-11). The men working with the younger children will be more apt to shrug off notions of typical masculinity than those working with older children (Skelton, 2003). Going along with the idea that there are several distinct differences within the population of male elementary teachers, Skelton and Francis performed a study in the UK which questions the value of the male teachers who seem to perpetuate misogynist and homophobic attitudes. The matter is preempted by a quick explanation stating that there are surely female teachers who are responsible for propagating negative values towards the opposite sex as well, and yet what they found was surprising. It was found that many men choose to teach in the upper elementary grades simply because they were perceived by others to be effective disciplinarians (Skelton & Francis, 2001). This external encouragement allowed them some support in the construction of their own masculinity. This could also explain why there is such a distinction in the attitudes towards traditional views of masculinity between men teaching younger elementary children and those teaching older elementary children.

The Need for a Male Role Model

The term 'role model' is one that is used quite loosely as well as the idea that men should be sought to fill that role in an elementary classroom. Rarely is the term itself clearly defined. Allen (2000) gives us an in-depth explanation as to what encompasses a role model:

- An ethical template for the exercise of adult responsibilities
- A symbol of special achievement
- A nurturer providing special education services (Allen, 2000)

The first definition of a role model as one who displays adult responsibilities is likely the definition most people think of when labeling a male elementary teacher as a role model. This concept clearly includes teachers of both sexes though when the phrase, "We need more male role models for our children," is used, it implies that this definition of a role model is being used. The second definition as a symbol of special achievement is one that is rarely associated with teachers of either sex. Indeed, most students tend to gather their inspiration from figures prevalent in the media rather than from their teachers (Skelton, 2001). The third definition is closely associated with the first in that it clearly includes teachers of either sex. While some might make the statement that there should be more male role models based on the first definition, others might correlate this statement with the idea that more men should be prominent as nurturers in an educational setting in an effort to break away from traditional views of hegemonic masculinity.

Now that a clearer definition of a role model has been provided, specifically in the sense that it applies to male elementary teachers, it paves the way for discussion regarding the necessity, or lack thereof, of a male role model. Recent media and

literature claim that men truly can be seen as positive role models in the classroom. In Sargent's (2001) case study, the men give the impression that simply being a male is enough when it comes to being a male role model. One of the men in the case study states:

Jake: I think it's good to have their child in front of a male watching them function. This is what adult men do. You're in their class for six hours a day, and I think it's advantageous for kids that don't have a male around their house. That's a role model (Sargent, 2001 pp. 119).

This might seem to contradict an early statement made from a similar case study which supported the idea that being a man wasn't enough to be a good teacher. This statement was referring to the quality of a teacher and not to their status as a role model. Indeed the message behind this statement was agreed upon by the others in Sargent's case study, but only when talking about modeling for boys. When modeling for girls, the men were much clearer when discussing the details of the type of man they wanted their female students to observe and interact with. A common theme was presenting a male influence to the girls that would counter some of the stereotypical views that they might have already formed in their lives.

Allan's (1994) work yielded similar results to Sargent's in that the men studied felt that "male role-modeling" was expected from them as it was a vital function that they could offer and that female teachers couldn't. They also had difficulties in describing just what they did that allowed them to take on the status of a role model. This case study, however, allowed the men to go into more detail regarding the conflicting views of what type of a role model they were expected to be. Some men felt that it was important

for the students to see that men could perform certain tasks or display certain qualities that were traditionally feminine, while others believed that more traditional qualities should be modeled. Duane, displaying an extremely traditional view, tells us what qualities he believes should be modeled. This statement was made after he was asked if there was anything a man could do to give himself an advantage in working in an elementary school:

He had best not be the least bit feminine. If a man were perceived as feminine, I'm sure it would be a problem. You need to be a male role model. Be the opposite of feminine. Now that's pretty subjective. I guess I see it as a man who is willing to be involved in male related activities. That is not to say that involvement in female related activities is wrong...but sports, fishing, rather than cooking. I don't think it's wrong to do the cooking and things that are traditionally feminine, but yet the kids need foremost for you the male...the traditional male type things need to be more preeminent (Allan, 1994 pp. 10).

This stance presented to us by Duane can be scrutinized as being too extreme as it could possibly lead to the teacher passing on his views of hegemonic masculinity to his students. And yet teachers taking the other extreme can be problematic as well. Seifert (1998) reasons that a man who is considered sensitive and nurturing will also be scrutinized, especially by parents who don't want their child being taught by a "soft" male. These two directly oppositional views regarding just what type of male role modeling is necessary, can create many complications for the men who choose to teach as they are forced to walk a thin line between these two views.

The case can also be made against men serving as role models in the classroom as it is apparent that not all men reflect the same values as those in Sargent's (2001) case study. Several prominent studies by Skelton (2001) and Francis & Skelton (2001) show that certain male teachers can actually perpetuate dominant and misogynistic attitudes of masculinity and therefore alienate female students. Francis and Skelton contend that a call for more male role models in classrooms should be dismissed until more emphasis is placed on teacher training that will prevent men from having a negative impact on gender construction. This case study in particular from the UK gives this statement grounds to stand on as the behaviors observed by one of the teachers studied was surprising to say the least. Over the course of the study, he managed to provide many examples of flirting with his female students (in a way that he assured the researcher was purely innocent), harassing women in front of his class, propagating his misogynistic views, and using homophobia as a disciplinary tool (Francis & Skelton, 2001).

Not only can certain male teachers have a negative influence on their students, some studies claim that there is a need for more male role models is an irrelevant statement in itself. A Finnish study was performed by Lahelma (2000) which researched 13 and 14 year old students and found that their attitudes towards the teacher's gender had little connection with their views of the teacher. In fact, most of the characteristics that they viewed as positive had to do with classroom management and the methods through which the teacher spoke to the students. It must be kept in mind that this research is based on interviews from 13 and 14 year old children and that the actual impact of a male role model would be difficult to gauge as the children themselves would likely have little cognizance of how these issues might influence them (Lahelma, 2000).

There are others who agree with this notion that males shouldn't be sought after in an attempt to establish role models in the classroom. Ashley's (2003) study presents findings which claim that teachers aren't that influential as role models in the first place and that it is rather the other male students that play the biggest role models. Through his findings he states the importance of peer-groups in establishing the identity of students. He does go on to say that having a male teacher in the primary grades could be seen as beneficial to the students, but only if they don't perpetuate views of hegemonic masculinity.

Why Are There So Few?

As of today, men make up roughly 30% of the workforce in grades kindergarten through 12 (Allan, 1997). It is clear that they are a minority, though it can hardly be said that women dominate the profession. However, in elementary school, men make up around 12% of the workforce and here's where it can be said that men are largely underrepresented (Allan, 1997). Aren't there any plans or programs being utilized in an effort to bring more males into the field? There actually has been a movement calling for more men going on one hundred years now though it has obviously met with little success (Allan, 1997). So what exactly is preventing men from entering this occupation? This has been a topic heavily researched and studies have found several factors to be common deterrents to males considering employment in elementary education. Cushman (2005) presents four of the basic issues that nearly all studies have found to be influential in keeping men out of the classroom. The four deterrents he lists include a lack of status, low salary, working in an environment dominated by women and the threat of sexual abuse charges.

The first issue presented has to do with the low social status attributed to teaching. Men are wary of entering a profession that society has labeled as women's work (Rice & Goessling, 2005). And not only is teaching associated with women, but it has been deemed a job requiring few intellectual skills as outlined by this 1925 report which defined teaching as a, "field of effort for the girl of average intellectual capacity and normal maternal instincts" (Skelton, 2001). This low status is applied specifically towards a career in elementary education as recent case studies have shown how some men have struggled with these stereotypes. In one such case, Adrian, a man recently committed to becoming an elementary teacher, was surprised by a friend's reaction to his decision. The response to his news was, "You can do better than that" (Foster & Newman, 2005).

Cushman's second deterrent is that a teacher's salary is too low and that many men feel that it will not be enough to support their family. In some studies it has been found that some men want to be the sole provider for their family and that the low salary would place a financial burden on them (Cooney & Bittner, 2001). In Sargent's (2001) case study, one participant stated:

I've talked to superintendents who came up with the idea that teaching pay was designed for women who went to college and became a professional as a teacher, but they were the second income in the family and not the primary and so the pay has been that way for years and that's why
(Sargent, 2001 pp. 109).

Another member in the same case study dismisses the idea that teacher's wages aren't sufficient:

I think a lot of men have the idea that you're not going to make any money teaching elementary school. I'm very comfortable. I give a lot of money to charity. I live in this house. I got a pool. I mean, what do you want? You know, you can only eat so many steaks at each meal as they say (Sargent, 2001 pp. 97).

This being one of the most commonly discussed deterrents, it is important to refer back to a previously mentioned fact that the men who make the decision to teach are likely to be more interested in the intrinsic rewards of the occupation rather than the extrinsic incentives (Chusmir, 1990). Because male teachers are motivated by intrinsic rewards, it reinforces the idea that the kind of man motivated by money (extrinsic rewards) would be scared away from teaching.

The third deterrent is the issue involving the dominance of women in the profession. Men are quickly faced with the fact that they are a gender minority in an environment where women are comfortable in establishing control (King, 1998). Allan's (1997) research claims that this control is rooted in the number of women employed, their seniority, and the stereotypical views that women are more suited for taking care of children. In the same research, Allan found a pattern in his participants experiences regarding the challenges presented to them by female colleagues. One of the men even claimed that the biggest challenge he had faced as a teacher was attempting to relate with the female teachers (Allan, 1997). This combination of having to enter a world dominated by women and the promise of a lack of same gender peers proves to be too much for some men who are considering teaching.

The fourth deterrent mentioned by Cushman is the issue of having to deal with the issue of physical contact with children and therefore facing the possibility of sexual abuse charges. Skelton (2001) states that conviction rates for male teachers are surprisingly low which causes some to wonder why there is such a stigma attached to men teaching at the elementary level. Regardless of the scarcity of actual cases being tried and convicted, many teachers still consider this threat to be significant enough that it causes a perpetual struggle (King, 1998). In King's study, many of the men involved described some of the ways in which they felt they had to deal with this issue. One man expressed his methods of preventing any such false accusations:

I have two or three little girls who come to class early and, of course, I can't let them in the room alone with me. They must wait outside the room. When I am in the room with a few students, I always leave the door open. I'm just watching my back (King, 1998 pp. 80).

While this situation can cause a sense of paranoia in new elementary teachers, some find that the societal pressures which force men to act in such a way can ultimately be damaging to the students. Cushman (2005) argues that children who observe these behaviors are left to wonder and form their own ideas about why they are considered safe with the female teachers and not with the male teachers. In this sense they are only perpetuating stereotypical beliefs that all men are dangerous and should therefore be avoided.

With these four deterrents, either working individually or in unison, it is no wonder that there is such a shortage of men in elementary schools. While these four factors are the prime deterrents for those who have considered teaching as a career, it is

important to note than many men never even consider a career in education simply because of the lack of male role models in their own school experiences (Rice & Goessling, 2005).

How to Bring the Men Back?

There are clearly various factors that have led to a decrease in the rate of men pursuing careers in teaching in elementary schools. This noted trend has led to some interest in regaining the number of men in the classroom. However, there is debate regarding the benefits of this process.

The concept of bringing more men into teaching is often called “recruiting” and these past and current programs designed to do so, seemingly have had little effect on the actual number of males in elementary schools. While this idea that our society needs more male teachers is voiced loudly by members of the media and those involved in education, there are a few, such Christine Skelton, who claim that the emphasis shouldn’t be placed on recruiting more males, but rather on the training and education that we are providing for the few who are in the profession (Skelton & Francis, 2001). Cushman (2005) agrees with this notion as he states that, “The simple request for more male teachers needs to be challenged, as increasing the proportion of males in schools is, by itself, not enough” (Cushman, 2005). He goes on to say that other, more pertinent, issues must be addressed first such as why we need more male teachers and what exactly is expected of these “male role models?” There were also a significant number of men within Sargent’s (2001) case study who believed that recruiting men would be a mistake as they thought that any program that invokes a surge in hiring will ultimately lead to a number of teachers who are substandard.

There are those, however, who are supportive of actively recruiting more men into education as Rice and Goessling (2005) list a number of very recent programs implemented at the collegiate level that apparently have met with some success. One program mentioned was the grouping of male preservice teachers with male academic advisors. This has obvious benefits as male academic advisors could serve as role models and offer advice as they prepare the future teachers for the challenges they will meet. Another idea that has worked was the grouping of several male students within education courses. The belief is that the men in the program will feel less isolated and will therefore participate more in classes and become more involved in their education. The last program discussed by Rice and Goessling is similar to the first in that it matches male preservice teachers to male teachers for their field placements. Through this, the men have another role model who can prepare them for the gender-specific problems which they will face while teaching.

Personally, I agree with the few men in Sargent's (2001) study who didn't believe that actively pursuing more males would be beneficial to the educational system. I think that the few men who make it through the previously addressed adversity, are the ones that ultimately belong in the classroom. If there are programs implemented that try to quickly bring about an influx in the number of male teachers, it will likely do more harm than good as it would bring in men who aren't ready to face the challenges faced by male elementary teachers. I do believe that more men should be "recruited" into the classroom, but I think that the process itself must be gradual if it is to be successful. One way in which this can be done is by exposing children from a young age to positive images of male teachers, whether it be through the media, children's literature or even

through the efforts of the current (predominantly female) teaching staff. Through this exposure, children will come to understand that men have a place in the classroom and they won't immediately fall in with the stereotype that teaching is a job that is only appropriate for women. Then as children get older and begin to ponder their career decisions, there could be programs implemented that would have strong, competent male elementary teachers talking to young men about the rewarding aspects of their occupation. Through programs such as these, which highlight the intrinsic rewards of teaching, I don't believe that the men recruited will be any different from the men who are currently displaying their capability in the educational system. These men would likely display the same characteristics and they could gradually increase their numbers while they break down the stereotypes that keep men out of the classroom.

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